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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session

United Nations University

Letter dated 29 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

At its fifty-ninth session, held from 22 to 24 April 2013, the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) took a decision to reduce the number of appointed members of the Council from 24 to 12.

Such a change would require textual amendments to the UNU Charter. Amendments to the UNU Charter require approval of the General Assembly pursuant to article XII of the UNU Charter.

In accordance with article XII of the UNU Charter, I am writing to request that the General Assembly consider these amendments. Accordingly, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I request the inclusion of an additional item entitled "United Nations University" in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session. I also request that the matter be allocated to the Second Committee for its consideration.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, please find attached an explanatory memorandum justifying the amendments (annex I) and a draft resolution on the amendments (annex II).

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum on reducing the number of appointed members of the Council of the United Nations University

1. In accordance with article XII of the Charter of the United Nations University (UNU), the Secretary-General seeks the approval of the General Assembly to reduce the number of appointed members of the UNU Council from the present 24 to 12.

The rationale for the proposed reduction in the number of appointed members

2. The UNU system now comprises 15 institutes and programmes located in 13 countries. Since the adoption of the UNU Charter (A/9149/Add.2) by the General Assembly in its resolution 3081 (XXVIII) on 6 December 1973, the University has grown from its sole headquarters location in metropolitan Tokyo to a network of research and training centres and programmes located in Africa, Asia, Europe and North and South America.

3. In accordance with article IV (1) of the UNU Charter, the Secretary-General and the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) jointly appoint 24 members of the UNU Council serving in their individual capacity. The Rector of the University is a member of the Council. The Secretary-General, the Director General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) are ex officio members of the Council. The term of office of Council members is six years, non-renewable.

4. According to the same article, the UNU Council is "to be established on a broad geographical basis with due regard to major academic, scientific, educational and cultural trends in the world, taking into account the various fields of study, with appropriate representation of young scholars".

5. The UNU Council is mandated to meet in regular session at least once a year. Until 1994, the Council met twice annually. The frequency of sessions was reduced to one per year on account of the high costs associated with convening meetings of 24 appointed members, the Rector of the University, the Secretary-General, the Director General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of UNITAR.

6. At its fifty-ninth session, held in April 2013, the UNU Council decided that, in order for it to fulfil the required strategic oversight function for the University, it would need to meet more frequently and to remain in closer contact with the University authorities. It was proposed that the Council should resume the previous practice and hold two sessions each year as a first step towards strengthening the governance of the University. A second step involved reducing the number of appointed members so that the overall cost of Council sessions in a fiscal year would remain roughly the same.

Effect of the reduction in the number of appointed members of the Council

7. By reducing the number of appointed members of the UNU Council from 24 to 12, it will be possible to increase the frequency of sessions from one session per year to two sessions per year without increasing the costs associated with the organization of Council sessions. Such a frequency of sessions will enable the Council to fulfil the strategic oversight function that it was meant to exercise.

Financial implications of the proposed reduction

8. By reducing the number of appointed members by half, the costs of organizing two sessions per year would remain the same. The duration of the sessions would be streamlined from the present four days to two days, thereby reducing the cost of individual sessions.

Conclusion

9. The proposed amendments will enhance the ability of the UNU Council to serve as the governing board of the University, as set out in the UNU Charter, and will help to ensure that the UNU fulfils its role as a think tank for the United Nations system and Member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2951 (XXVII) of 11 December 1972, by which it decided to establish the United Nations University, 3081 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, by which it adopted the Charter of the United Nations University, and 64/225 of 21 December 2009, by which it approved amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University,

Taking note of the decision taken by the Council of the United Nations University at its fifty-ninth session, held from 22 to 24 April 2013, by which the Council requested the Secretary-General, in accordance with article XII of the Charter of the United Nations University, to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, amendments to article IV of the Charter of the United Nations University to reduce the number of appointed members of the Council from 24 to 12,

Taking note also of the decision on the proposal to amend the Charter of the United Nations University adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its one hundred and ninety-second session, held in Paris in October 2013,[1]

Taking note further of the proposal of the Secretary-General to amend the Charter of the United Nations University in accordance with article XII thereof, made at the request of the Council of the United Nations University and after consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Approves the following amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University:

(a) Article IV, paragraph 1, shall be amended to read as follows:

"1. There shall be a Council of the University (hereinafter referred to as "the Council"), to be established on a broad geographical basis with due regard to major academic, scientific, educational and cultural trends in the world, taking into account the various fields of study, with appropriate representation of young scholars. The Council shall have 12 members serving in their individual capacity, who shall be appointed jointly by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO, in consultation with the agencies and programmes concerned, including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research* (hereinafter referred to as "UNITAR"), and taking into account the views of appropriate representative bodies. The Rector shall be a member of the University Council."

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[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its One Hundred and Ninety-second Session, Paris, 23 September-11 October 2013* (192 EX/Decisions), decision 43.

* Established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1934 (XVIII).

(b) Article IV, paragraph 3, shall be amended to read as follows:

"3. The term of office shall be six years, provided that, of the members first appointed pursuant to paragraph 1 of this article, the terms of six shall expire at the end of three years and the terms of the remaining six at the end of six years. No appointed member of the Council may serve continuously for more than six years. The Council shall be consulted in regard to the replacement of retiring members."